

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
15 March 2001 (15.03.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/17373 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **A23L 1/277, A21D 2/04, A23B 9/30**

(21) International Application Number: **PCT/US00/24033**

(22) International Filing Date: 30 August 2000 (30.08.2000)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
09/392,699 9 September 1999 (09.09.1999) US

(71) Applicant (*for all designated States except US*): **GENERAL MILLS, INC. [US/US]; Number One General Mills Boulevard, P.O. Box 1113, Minneapolis, MN 55440 (US).**

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (*for US only*): **METZGER, Lloyd, E. [US/US]; 9330 Hillside Drive, Champlin, MN 55316 (US).**

(74) Agents: **O'TOOLE, John, A. et al.; General Mills, Inc., Number One General Mills Boulevard, P.O. Box 1113, Minneapolis, MN 55440 (US).**

(81) Designated States (*national*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.

(84) Designated States (*regional*): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— With international search report.

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

WO 01/17373 A1

(54) Title: BLEACHED GRAIN AND GRAIN PRODUCTS AND METHODS OF PREPARATION

(57) Abstract: The present invention describes bleached grain products such as bleached whole wheat flour that are obtained having the color and taste of white flour by bleaching whole wheat kernels prior to conventional flour milling. The wheat kernels are treated with a peroxide solution to lighten the color of the bran layers. The bleached grain kernels can be tempered and milled into whole grain flours having 10 % to 12 % dietary fiber from the bran but which are white in color and bland in flavor. The whitened, high fiber whole wheat flours can be used to prepare good tasting, and nutritious products such as baked goods such as breads and pastries as well as pasta products, and ready-to-eat cereals or grain based snacks.

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BLEACHED GRAIN AND GRAIN PRODUCTS
AND METHODS OF PREPARATION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to food products and
5 to methods for their preparation. More particularly, the
present invention is directed towards bleached grain
products such as whole wheat flour, to bleached grain
intermediate products such as bleached wheat kernels and
to their methods of preparation.

10 Background of the Invention

The present invention provides improvements in the
processing or treatment of grains such as wheat. More
particularly, the present invention is directed towards
the provision of whole grain flour such as whole wheat
15 with the color and taste comparable to white flour or a
"white" whole wheat flour. Also, the present invention
provides methods for preparing such improved white whole
wheat flour and further to intermediate products useful
in the production of such improved finished products as
20 white whole wheat flour. Such intermediate products
include, for example, bleached grain kernels such as
bleached wheat kernels.

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Most consumers have experienced and readily recognize the difference between whole wheat bread and ordinary white bread. Most consumers also know that whole wheat bread is more nutritious, but consume white 5 bread anyway, because they like the taste better. This is especially true of children who can be particularly selective in food choices.

Through a particular treatment process, the present invention is able to lighten the darker color of whole 10 wheat flour, and all but eliminate the bitter flavors. As a result, the present invention provides whole wheat flours that can be used to provide finished whole wheat products that look and taste as good as those made with regular white flour.

15 The principle species of wheat are *Triticum vulgare* or bread wheat; *T. durum* which has extra hard kernels used primarily for macaroni and related pasta products; and *T. compactum* or club wheat, which has very soft kernels. Numerous varieties and cultivars within each 20 species are known.

All wheat generically comprise a major starchy endosperm, a smaller germ or sprouting section of the seed and a surrounding bran or husk layer. The endosperm makes up about 82-83% of the wheat kernel and is used in 25 the production of flour. Typically, the bran makes up 14-15%, is removed from the kernel and is used in animal and poultry feed. However, the bran can also be milled along with the endosperm to produce whole wheat flour. The germ is usually separated from the rest of the kernel 30 because its fat content limits the shelf life of the flour. The bran with or without the germ is sometimes referred to as "millfeed". Some special purpose whole

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grain flours include not only the bran but also the germ fraction.

In the United States, wheat is classified according to whether it is hard or soft, white or red, and planted 5 in winter or spring.

Soft or spring wheat is typically planted in the spring and harvested later in the fall. Soft wheat is normally white wheat. White soft wheat is used for the donut and pastry industries since a white color and bland 10 taste are essential flour quality attributes.

Hard or winter wheat is typically planted in the fall and harvested the following season in mid-summer. Winter wheat is normally red. Hard or red wheat is used for bread production. Red wheat has a distinctive taste 15 due to tannins in the bran. To minimize the amount of these flavor-bearing tannins, the wheat grain is milled so as to have as small a fraction as possible of the bran containing these tannins. Naturally white hard wheat is also increasingly available commercially and being used 20 more and more.

Even though the endosperm fraction is about 83%, in a typical flour milling process, the extraction rate of white patent flour generally runs about 72-75%. That is, for every hundred pounds of wheat, about 72-75 pounds of 25 flour is obtained. This flour contains about 1-2% dietary fiber from small amounts of the bran. The balance millfeed is very low value comprising bran and germ although containing some of the desirable endosperm.

The milling process can be adjusted to obtain an 30 increase in the flour yield but at the cost of including some of the bran. The presence of bran may lower the quality and thus value of the flour more than the

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increase in the value of the increase in yield. That is, the amount of flour obtained during the milling process is limited by contamination of the flour with bran that deteriorates flour quality. For flour made from red

5 wheat, less bran in the flour can be tolerated due to the presence of more color and flavor tannins in the bran. The darker bran typically makes the flour grayish in color, and also imparts bitter flavors.

The present invention provides a particular chemical
10 lightening treatment or wetting process, or wet bleaching process that bleaches wheat kernels after cleaning but prior to milling. Since wheat is typically wet tempered prior to milling anyway, this process is commercially practical with existing milling systems.

15 The principle advantage of the present invention is the provision of white whole grain flour having a high fiber content (\approx 11-12%) and other nutritional advantages of a whole grain flour that nonetheless has a white color and bland flavor comparable to conventional white flour.
20 Since additional endosperm is associated with the bran is also included, the yield of the flour milling process is surprisingly and, dramatically increased. More surprisingly, the amount of flour obtained can be increased without deterioration in flour quality in terms
25 of color and flavor.

Still another benefit is that the present invention provides enzyme inactivation that increases the stability of the flour.

Still another benefit is that the present invention
30 provides substantial reductions in the viability of toxin producing molds and reductions in levels of mycotic

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toxins in the flours that can occur as a result of mold growth prior to milling.

These and further objects and advantages of the present invention will become clearer in light of the 5 following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment of this invention described in connection with the drawings.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In its method of preparation aspect, the present 10 invention resides in methods of treating wheat prior to milling, essentially comprising the step of: treating whole grain kernels having an exterior bran layer with peroxide to decrease the color of the bran layer to provide a lightened grain kernel.

15 In its principal product aspect, the present invention resides in finished whole flour products characterized by high levels of dietary fiber, i.e., from the bran but which nonetheless have a white color and bland flavor of white flours having only 1% to 2% fiber 20 from bran.

In still another product aspect of one and the same invention, the present invention further provides intermediate products such as bleached or whitened grain kernels suitable for use in producing the present 25 finished whole grain flours.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed towards bleached grain products such as whole wheat flour, to bleached grain products intermediate products such as bleached 30 wheat kernels and to their methods of preparation. Each of the treatment method steps are described in detail as follows.

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The starting material for use herein is cleaned dry or "milling quality" wheat kernels. Unprocessed commodity wheat is first prepared for milling in substantially conventional manner. The wheat preparing process typically involves several well-known cleaning steps to produce clean dry milling quality wheat. For example, the wheat preparing process typically involves a magnetic separator that removes iron or steel particles that dirty the wheat during harvest and transportation.

Various screening steps such as reciprocating screens are also used to separate stones, sticks and other coarse and fine materials. The wheat can be fed to an air aspirator to remove other light impurities. A disc separator can be used to remove barley, oats, cockle and other foreign seeds. A scourer such as beaters in a screen cylinder scour off impurities and roughage. The various cleaning steps can be practiced in any convenient manner to provide the dry cleaned or milling quality wheat starting material for use herein.

The preferred starting material preferably consists of whole intact kernels to minimize exposure of the endosperm to the bleaching treatment steps herein.

The present invention finds particular suitability for use in connection with the provision of whole flours of wheat. While the present invention is thus described with particular reference to wheat, the present invention also finds usefulness in the provision of whole flours of other common major cereal grains including those of corn (maize), soybeans, oats, rice, barley and mixtures thereof. While these major grains are most popular, minor useful grains include amaranth, millet, sorghum, triticale, flax and mixtures thereof. The present

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invention also finds particular suitability for use for rice products.

While red wheat can be beneficially treated using the present methods, the preferred starting material is 5 white wheat whether of a soft variety or the less common hard variety. White wheat is preferred due to brightness or whiteness of the whole wheat flour prepared from bleached wheat from white wheat as a starting material.

The present methods essentially comprise the step of 10 treating the grain with a peroxygen compound especially hydrogen peroxide H_2O_2 . The peroxide treatment results in bleached or whitened whole grain kernels.

In the preferred embodiment, the present methods involve a combination treatment comprising a treatment of 15 the wheat kernels with an alkaline solution and a peroxide solution. In a less preferred embodiment, the present methods comprise treatment of the grain with only a peroxide solution. In the most preferred embodiment, the grain is treated with the alkaline solution and the 20 peroxide solution simultaneously. In another embodiment, the alkaline treatment and peroxide treatment are practiced as separate sequential steps.

A peroxide bleaching or whitening treated is desirable herein since the residual peroxide degrades 25 into harmless oxygen and water. In contrast, other types of bleaching techniques can result in either undesirable modification of the function properties of the finished flour or undesirably high or even illegal concentrations of residual bleaching agents or both.

30 Useful herein are peroxygen concentrations of about 5% to 40%, preferably about 6% to 40% and most preferably about 10% to 40%.

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The temperature of the peroxide treatment step can range from ambient temperature (about 50°F) to about 165°F (73.9°C). Preferably, both the peroxide solution and the grain are each warm. Better results are obtained 5 when the treatment step is practiced with both grain and peroxide solution heated to about 130° to 165°F (54.4° to 73.9°C), and for best results about 160° to 165°F (71.1° to 73.9°C). Higher temperatures are preferred since higher temperature increase the effectiveness of the 10 peroxide. However, excessively high temperatures are undesirable since exposure of the grain to these higher temperatures can adversely heat denature their proteins.

The amount of peroxide employed depends upon a variety of processing parameters and desired level of 15 bleaching. Due to the cost of peroxide, the minimum amount required to accomplish the desired level of bleaching is generally used.

To assist in the minimum consumption or usage of peroxide, preferably, the peroxide solution can 20 optionally additionally further comprises a peroxide stabilizing agent. For example, sodium silicate (at about 1%) and/or magnesium sulfate (at about 0.1%). Also, the peroxide solution can further optionally additionally include a chelating agent such as 25 ethylenediaminetetraacetate ("EDTA") can optionally be added to remove any metal ions which may otherwise bind to destroy the peroxide.

Still another optional ingredient in the peroxide solution is a conventional deforming agent (e.g., about 30 0.1% to 1%). Addition or inclusion of a defoaming agent is desirable to minimize the generation of any foaming caused by any gas evolution that occurs during the

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peroxide treatment step. The presence of a defoaming agent is especially useful when a CO₂ gas generating alkaline material is employed such as sodium bicarbonate as further described herein. Gas foaming is mildly
5 undesirable in processing commercial quantities of grain.

The amount of hydrogen peroxide can vary depending upon the efficiency of the process parameters and the degree of bleaching desired. Good results are obtained when the weight ratio of hydrogen peroxide to flour
10 ranges from about 1 to 5 parts to 100 parts grain.

The treatment step can be practiced by, for example, applying an aqueous solution of hydrogen peroxide to the grain kernels. This application can be practiced by immersing the grain into an aqueous bath or great excess
15 of peroxide solution. To reduce the consumption of peroxide, the application step is preferably practiced by wetting the grain or applying only enough peroxide solution to coat the grain surfaces. A preferred technique for practicing this wetting variation of the
20 application or treatment step is to spray the peroxide solution onto the grain, preferably with agitation or movement of the grain.

In one embodiment the method of the present invention generally involves a step B of treating the
25 wheat kernels with an alkaline solution, optionally drying the wheat kernels and subsequently practicing the step A of treating them with the peroxygen solution.

In this embodiment, step B preferably involves wetting the wheat kernels with an alkaline solution.
30 Alkaline solutions of 1% to saturated having approximate temperatures of 50° to 165°F preferably 130° to 165°F and most preferably 160° to 165°F can be used in the process,

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particularly when applied to the wheat kernels. Any food grade alkaline material can be used including sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and mixtures thereof. The preferred 5 method utilizes food grade sodium hydroxide, sodium carbonate or sodium bicarbonate.

The alkaline treatment solution can comprise from about 1% to about 10% of the alkaline material. When applied as a separate treatment step, sufficient amounts 10 of the alkaline solution are applied to thoroughly wet the surface of the grains. Good results are obtained in this treatment of wetting step when about 10% to 15% of the alkaline solution are applied to a the wheat or other grain kernels. That is about 10-15 kilogram of alkaline 15 solution for every 100kg of grain.

The duration of the alkaline treatment step is short and just long enough for the alkaline solution to infuse the outmost bran layers yet minimize infusion into the endosperm. Good results are obtained when the treatment 20 step range from about 30 seconds to about five minutes, preferably about 30 seconds to about three minutes.

In a preferred embodiment, the alkaline treatment step B is practiced by applying or wetting the grain by spraying.

25 In those less preferred embodiments wherein the grain is added to a bath or an excess of the alkaline solution, the alkaline solution wetted wheat are next preferably allowed to drain and to dry e.g., drip dry.

After drying, the alkaline treated grain kernels can 30 then treated with or again wetted using a peroxygen compound. Hydrogen peroxide is most preferred for economic reasons.

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Peroxygen concentrations of 10-40% work particularly well in the process when applied to the wheat temperatures of approximately 50° to 165°F for durations of between 30 seconds to 3 minutes. Although bleaching 5 will be successful when the wheat are treated with peroxygen solutions having temperatures greater than 165°F or higher, higher temperatures should preferably be avoided with longer contact time to prevent protein degradation.

10 In the most preferred embodiment the alkaline solution and the hydrogen peroxide solution are admixed and immediately thereafter applied thus simultaneously to the grain kernels. In a preferred variation, the treatment step is practiced with added heating especially 15 with microwave heating. On an industrial scale practicing of the present methods, microwave heating may not be economical.

When the peroxygen solution is applied to the alkaline treated wheat, the peroxygen and the alkaline 20 solutions undergo a chemical reaction. The first wetting step causes the alkaline solution to slightly saturate the outer bran layer (and hopefully not the interior endosperm) during the first wetting step, so that applying the peroxygen solution to the wheat causes the 25 chemical reaction between the two solutions to occur directly on the exterior of the grain the reaction it is believed causes the formation of an alkaline hydroperoxide radical, which is a bleaching agent that causes the color in the bran. Because this reaction 30 occurs on the surface of the kernel, the full magnitude of the reaction is utilized in bleaching the bran.

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When an alkaline material is used that generates CO₂, the reaction of the peroxygen and alkaline solutions forms and liberates a burst of gas bubbles. If residues such as soil, ground mould, or bacteria such as 5 aflotoxins are present on the grain kernels the treatment beneficially tends to clean or reduce the degree of contamination.

The concentrations, temperatures, and wetting times described above are preferred ranges. For both the 10 peroxygen solution and the alkaline solution, many different combinations of concentration, temperature, and wetting time will cause bleaching of the bran or wheat kernels and these variables may be adjusted to provide varying levels of whiteness of the treated wheat.

15 Wheat grain is a low cost commodity. At present, the cost of peroxide per pound is about 10 times the price of wheat grain treated. An advantage of using an alkaline treatment is to minimize the amount of peroxide required to achieve the desired bleaching or whitening 20 effect. While peroxide treatment alone can be used to practice the present grain treatment, the amount of peroxide required to achieve desired levels of whitening of the grain are high and thus costly relative to the amount required when an alkaline pretreatment is 25 employed. Also, surprisingly, the amount of peroxide required is slightly less when the alkaline solution is admixed with the peroxide solution immediately prior to application only the grains.

If desired, the present methods can further include 30 a rinse washing step prior to the tempering step. Such a washing step can remove any residual peroxide or alkaline

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material. Residual alkaline material can impart an undesirable soapy flavor to the finished flour.

For those sequential treatment variations, if desired, the present methods can further include an intermediate drying step to reduce all or a portion of the moisture added by the alkaline solution treatment or wetting step.

The present methods can further optionally include a finish acidic washing step. Increasing the amount of alkaline material employed beneficially reduces the amount of peroxide required to accomplish desired levels of bleaching. However, residual alkaline material can result in the pH of the finished white sole wheat flour from a conventional pH of about 6.3 to over 6.7. At such high pH values, the baking and other functional properties of the flour can be adversely affected. The present optional methods are desirably practiced so as to provide a whole wheat flour having a pH of about 6.3 to 6.8, preferably about 6.3 to 6.7.

An unexpected advantage of the present invention is that such surface treatment reduces the level of mold and other bacteriological contamination of the grain. As a result, the finished flour product can have lower levels of undesirable toxins associated with mold growth.

Treatment of the bran while still an intact portion of the grain kernels provides greater control over the bleaching process and provides for easier physical manipulation than treatment of bran in an isolated particulate form. In particulate form, the bran tends to undesirably clump and is difficult to handle and to control the treatment step.

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As a result of treating, for example, red hard wheat, the color of the resultant bleached grain kernel intermediate product is similar to white hard wheat. Of course, white or hard wheat grain is increasingly more widely available. However, even though the visual appearance of the present bleached wheat is similar to naturally colorless white hard wheat, the genetic profile of the present bleached wheat still contains the color producing gene alleles of red wheat.

Wheat kernels going into the tempering step generally have a starting moisture content ranging from about 10% to 12%. The tempering step generally involves steeping or admixing the grain with water. The purpose of the tempering step is to both toughen the outer bran coats for easier separation. The absorbed water also softens or mellows the endosperm to facilitate the subsequent breaking or milling operations. Generally, the tempering step is conducted at ambient temperature. The tempering is continued for times sufficient for the kernels to reach moisture contents ranging from about 14% to 15%, preferably about 15% to 16%. While not critical per se, good results are generally obtained when the tempering step is practiced for holding times ranging from about 10-14 hours, preferably about 11-13 hours and for best results about 12 hours.

The tempering step can be conveniently practiced utilizing conventional drying apparatus and techniques.

Thereafter, the bleached and tempered grain kernels can be milled in a conventional manner to provide whole grain flours. In a preferred variation, the milling step is practiced to separate out the germ fraction to provide

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a whole grain flour substantially comprising only the bran and endosperm but not the germ fraction.

The finished whole wheat flour provided herein has a color and taste very similar to conventional white flour even though the total dietary fiber content ranges from 8% to 12% preferably about 10% to 12% provided by the bran. The improved color is not only readily visually apparent but also can be easily measured using conventional colorometry equipment and techniques. The flour preferably ranges in pH from about 6.3 to 6.7.

Still another unexpected advantage resides in the reduced level of enzyme activity in the finished flour products prepared from the present intermediate bleached grain kernels herein. For those whole grain flower finished products that additionally contain a germ fraction, such reduced enzyme activity levels is especially beneficial in extending the shelf life of such flours. Also, while not wishing to be bound by the proposed theory, it is speculated herein that enzyme inactivation, particularly of browning causing enzymes, is the mechanism responsible for the resistance to browning during extended shelf storage at room temperatures that some whole grain flours can experience.

Still another surprising advantage of the present invention is that the present peroxide treatment while providing the benefit of inactivating various enzymes does not result in gluten inactivation such as can occur using a heat treatment for enzyme inactivation.

Still another surprising advantage of the present invention resides in the increase in gluten strength of doughs prepared from flour products of the present invention. Gluten activity is important to bread making

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and some batter applications such as for muffins. Not only does the present enzyme inactivation benefit occur without decreasing gluten strength, the present invention actually provided gluten strengthening benefits.

5 Subsequent conventional flour treatment to increase gluten strength such as by treatment with or addition potassium bromate can be minimized or even eliminated. Thus, high gluten strength, bromate free whole flour is provided.

10 Also provided herein are whole wheat flours of a high quality taste and flavor that have enhanced gluten strength.

The present whitened high quality whole wheat flours can be used to prepare a wide variety of finished grain 15 based food products. The flours can be used to prepare white whole grain breads, pastries, baked goods (e.g., muffins, quick breads, layer cakes), and griddle cakes such as pancakes. The whole grain flours can be sold in bulk or in smaller quantities, e.g., 1kg at retail in 20 conventional packages. The present whole grain flours can be used as ingredients in dry mixes for such finished food products. The present intermediate grain products and can be used in the preparation of ready-to-eat cereals or grain based snack products.

25 Even the mill feed byproducts of the present invention are of higher value and quality by virtue of the reductions in color and flavor. The present invention also can be used to provide improved low fiber flour (1-2% dietary fiber) of improved quality of even 30 lower flavor and whiter color.

Thus since the invention disclosed herein may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from

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the spirit or general characteristics thereof, some of which forms have been indicated, the embodiments described herein are to be considered in all respects illustrative and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is to be indicated by the appended claims, rather than by the foregoing description, and all changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are intended to be embraced therein.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of bleaching cereal grains, comprising the steps of:
 - A. treating whole grain kernels having an exterior bran layer with peroxide to decrease the color of the bran layer to provide a lightened grain kernel.
- 5 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the cereal grain is cleaned to provide milling quality grain prior to treatment with peroxide.
- 10 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the cereal grain is selected from the group consisting of wheat, rice, barley, corn (maize), oats, triticale, amaranth, and soybeans.
- 15 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the cereal grain is selected from the group consisting of wheat, rice, barley and soybeans.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the cereal grain is selected from the group consisting of wheat and rice.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the cereal grain is 20 wheat.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein the cereal grain is a red wheat.
8. The method of claim 6 wherein the cereal grain is a white wheat.
- 25 9. The method of claim 8 wherein the white wheat is a hard wheat.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein the treatment with peroxide step A comprises applying a peroxide solution to the cereal grain.
- 30 11. The method of claim 10 comprising applying sufficient amounts of the peroxide solution to wet substantially the entire surfaces of the grain kernels.

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12. The method of claim 11 wherein the treatment with peroxide step A comprises spraying the peroxide solution on to the grain kernels.
13. The method of claim 11 wherein step A includes applying an aqueous solution of about 6% to 40% H₂O₂ at a temperature of about 50° to 165° for about 20 seconds to five minutes.
14. The method of claim 14 applying about 1 to 5 parts H₂O₂ per 100 parts of grain.
15. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising the step of B treating whole grain kernels with an alkaline solution.
16. The method of claim 13 wherein step B applying an alkaline solution comprising about 1% to saturation in amounts of about 10 parts to 15 parts (dry weight) of alkaline material per 100 parts grain.
17. The method of claim 16 wherein step B is practiced at a temperature of about 130° to 165°F.
18. The method of claim 15 wherein step B is practiced as a separate prior step.
19. The method of claim 18 additionally comprising a washing step intermediate step B and step A.
20. The method of claim 18 additionally comprising a drying step intermediate step B and step A.
21. The method of claim 15 wherein step B is practiced simultaneous with step A.
22. The method of claim 21 wherein the alkaline solution and peroxide solution are combined immediately prior to application onto the grain.
23. The method of claim 22 wherein the treatment is practiced at temperature of 100° to 165°F.

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24. The method of claim 23 wherein the treatment step is practiced with supplemental heating during the step.
25. The method of claim 24 wherein at least a portion of the supplemental heating is supplied by microwave
- 5 heating.
26. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising the step of tempering the treated grain to provide a tempered grain.
27. The method of claim 15 additionally comprising the 10 step of tempering the treated grain to provide a tempered grain.
28. The method of claim 26 additionally comprising the step of milling the tempered grain to provide a whole grain flour.
- 15 29. The method of claim 28 wherein the milling step is practiced to provide a whole grain flour without a germ fraction.
30. The product prepared by the method of claim 1.
31. The product prepared by the method of claim 3.
- 20 32. The product prepared by the method of claim 5.
33. The product prepared by the method of claim 7.
34. The product prepared by the method of claim 10.
35. The product prepared by the method of claim 15.
36. The product prepared by the method of claim 16.
- 25 37. The product prepared by the method of claim 18.
38. The product prepared by the method of claim 22.
39. The product prepared by the method of claim 29.
40. An improved whole wheat flour prepared from peroxide bleached whole grains of wheat having a white color and a
- 30 dietary fiber content of about 10% to 12%.
41. The improved whole wheat flour of claim 40 substantially free of any bromate bleaching agent.

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42. The improved whole wheat flour of claim 41 prepared from white wheat.

43. The improved whole wheat flour of claim 41 having a pH of about 6.3 to 6.7.

5 44. The improved whole wheat flour of claim 43 prepared from hard white wheat.

45. A finished baked good prepared from the flour of claim 40.

10 46. The flour of claim 40 admixed with sugar, salt, and leavening.

47. A method of bleaching cereal grains, comprising the steps of:

15 applying whole cereal grains with an alkaline solution of sodium bicarbonate or sodium hydroxide at a concentration of about 1% to 10% and a temperature of about 50° to 165°F in a weight ratio of alkaline solution to grain ranging from about 10:100 to about 15:10 for about 30 seconds to three minutes, and then applying a peroxide solution at a concentration of about 4% to 20% H₂O₂ to the cereal grains for about 30 seconds to the three minutes at a temperature of about 50° to 165°F to provide bleached cereal grains.

20 48. A method of reducing mycotic contamination of cereal grains, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing alkaline solution and a peroxygen solution;

(b) applying grain kernels with the alkaline solution to provide grain kernels wetted with the alkaline solution;

30 (c) draining the alkaline solution from the grain kernels;

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(d) drying the grain kernels wetted with the alkaline solution to provide dried alkaline treated grain kernels; and then
5 (e) applying the grain kernels with the peroxygen solution whereby to cause the alkaline solution and the peroxygen solution to chemically react on the surface of the grain kernels.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 00/24033

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 A23L1/277 A21D2/04 A23B9/30

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 A23L A21D A23B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

FSTA, EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 219 601 A (DEVIC MICHEL) 15 June 1993 (1993-06-15)	1-6, 10, 11, 13-19, 21-24, 30-32, 34-38 47, 48
A	claims 1,4,6,10,11,13,20; examples 4,7 column 1, line 16 - line 26 column 1, line 36 - line 38 column 2, line 46 - line 53 column 3, line 30 - line 35 column 4, line 1 - line 3 column 4, line 19 - line 22 column 5, line 4 - line 8 ---- -/-	

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
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Date of the actual completion of the international search

Date of mailing of the international search report

8 December 2000

21/12/2000

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Heezius, A

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inte.	ional Application No
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